

Message Text

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10
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 ORM-02 AID-05 DHA-02

OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 IGA-02

ABF-01 /105 W
----- 097289

R 261414Z OCT 76
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 201
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEOBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USMISSION USUN

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 7296

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, UNRWA
SUBJECT: UNRWA FUNDING

REF: STATE 259069

1. AMBASSADOR SUMMONED TO FONMINISTRY OCTOBER 20 TO RECEIVE PLEA FROM DIRECTOR OF PALESTINE AFFAIRS FOR FURTHER USG ASSISTANCE TO THIS YEAR'S UNRWA BUDGET. DIRECTOR ADVISED THAT DAMASCUS UNRWA REP HAS INFORMED MINISTRY THAT FLOUR DISTRIBUTION IN SYRIA WILL SHORTLY BE STOPPED BOTH BECAUSE OF SHORTAGE OF SUPPLIES AND LOCK OF MONEY TO COVER FURTHER PURCHASES. DIRECTOR NOTE HEAVY BURDEN SYRIA WAS ALREADY CARRYING IN HELPING FEED SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF LEBANESE REFUGEES AS WELL AS LEBANESE IN AREAS UNDER SYRIAN CONTROL. ALSO EMPHASIZED HIS GOVERNMENT'S CONCERN THAT PALESTINIAN CAMPS NOT BE STIRRED UP OVER CHANGE IN LONG-STANDING RATION DISTRIBUTION PROCEDURES.

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2. AMBASSADOR TOLD DIRECTOR OF MOST RECENT PLEDGE (REFTEL).

ASKED WHICH OTHER GOVERNMENT SARG WAS PLANNING APPROACH. DIRECTOR REPLIED HE HAD ALREADY SPOKEN TO FRENCH AMTASSADOR, WHO MADE IT CLEAR FRANCE NOT INTERESTED IN SUPPLEMENTAL CONTRIBUTION, AS WELL AS A "FEW OTHER EUROPEANS." HE WAS ALSO THINKING ABOUT CALLING INIRANIAN AMBASSADOR. AMBASSADOR ASKED IF DIRECTOR PLANNED ANY APPROACH TO ARAB OIL STATE AMBASSADORS IN DAMASCUS. DIRECTOR REPLIED LAMELY THAT SARG SAW PROBLEM OF UNRWA FUNDING MORE AS AN INTERNATIONAL ONE THAN AN ARAB WORLD PROBLEM.

3. AMBASSADOR ADVISED HE WOULD REPORT DEMARCHE TO WASHINGTON, NOTING THAT SIR JOHN RENNIE REPORTEDLY TILL INNEW YORK COORDINATING FUND DRIVE.

4. WE HAVE CHECKED WITHUNRWA REP DAMASCUS TO DETERMINE WHAT PERIOD HE FORESEES REMAINS BEFORE FLOUR DISTRIBUTIONMUST CEASE. HE ADVISED THAT COMBINED OCT. AND NOV. DISTRIBUTION WOULD TAKE PLACE END OF THIS WEEK. HE NOTED JANPANESE HAVE PROVIDED ENOUGHT RICE TO DISTRIBUTE THREE KILOS TO EACH REFUGEE, AND SARG HAS NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION PROPOSAL TO EXCHANGE FLOUR FOR RICE AT TWO-TO-ONE RATION, THUS PERMITTING EACH REFUGEE SIX KILOS OF FLOUR PER MONTH FOR OCT., NOV., AND DEC. (AT COST TO SARG OF APPROX. DOLRS 75,000). DIRECTOR NOTED MONTHLY FLOUR RATION ORDINARILY TEN KILOS, WHICH WOULD STILL LEAVE FOUR KILO DEFICIT PER MONTH TO MAKE UP EVEN IF PRIMIN KHULAYFAWI AGREES TO RICE-FOR-FLOUR EXCHANGE. HE SAID SOME FLOUR AVAILABLE IN DAMASCUS WAREHOUSES DESTINED FOR LEBANON, BUT UNRWA HEADQUARTERS REFUSED TO RELEASE IT FOR SYRIA AND WILL DISTRIBUTE IT TO UNRWA CAMPS IN LEBANON IN SMALL SHIPMENTS. HE ADDED THAT IN PAST COUPLE WEEKS SARG OPENED BAKERIES IN LOCAL AMPS, A REVERSAL OF PAST POLICY, TO MINIMIZE HARD-SHIPS RESULTING FROM DELAY OF FLOUR DISTRIBUTION NORMALY UNDERTAKEN TENTH OF EACH MONTH. HE SAID FULL STOCKS MAINTAINED OF OTHER FOOD ITEMS DISTRIBUTED WITH THE FLOUR.
MURPHY

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